

BIRD NEWS FROM CARR VALE NATURE RESERVE  
AND SURROUNDING AREA

AUGUST 2012

Whilst the 101 species recorded during the month wasn't a record it was only the fourth time that the ton had been broken for this month and seven new birds for the year took the year list up to 138. This is the same figure as for 2010 and 2011 and just two below the highest ever end of August tally. For the first time since we started our run of continuous daily coverage both of the principal observers at the site decided to go away for the same week. Fortunately Arthur Gee stepped in and provided daily cover whilst we were away and thus the cover was maintained taking the total to 4,543 consecutive days. The weather remained unsettled and heavy rain towards the end of the month ensured that what little mud we had disappeared, although it did top up the southern flash, which had finally dried out only a couple of days before. A decent dry spell during early September would have this flash back in good condition by mid-month.

Up to eight **Cormorants** were present daily, one or two **Hobbies** were logged on 22 dates, one or two **Peregrines** were seen on eight dates until the 14th, up to five **Little Owls** were logged on 24 dates, one or two **Kingfishers** were seen on 23 dates with **Green Woodpeckers** logged on 12 dates and **Great-spotted Woodpeckers** recorded on 19 dates. The **Cetti's Warbler** relocated to below the mound where it was heard calling and occasionally uttering brief snatches of song on 17 dates whilst **Tree Sparrows** continued to feed young at Mill Farm.

A **Green Sandpiper** and a juvenile **Greenshank** were present on the 1st, the latter remaining until the 8th whilst two **Green Sandpipers** were present on the 2nd and 3rd. A **Barnacle Goose** on the 3rd was new for the year, the same day a **Water Rail** was heard calling and an adult **Common Tern** was seen, **Cormorants** peaked at 11 on the 4th when six **Great-crested Grebes** were still present, a **Whimbrel** was seen flying north and a **Comma** was on the mound. On the 5th an **Osprey** flew south-west, two **Little Ringed Plovers** (one an adult) were seen, a party of eight **Black-tailed Godwits** flew south-east and a **Common Sandpiper** was present (the latter remaining until the following day). The family of three **Oystercatchers** was last seen on the 6th when three juvenile **Little Ringed Plovers** were present on the southern flash. A juvenile **Redshank** was an unusual August visitor on the 7th when a family party of at least four **Treecreepers** was found, an early **Tree Pipit** flew south, a **Small Copper** was recorded and a female **Roe Deer** with two fawns was seen. Two **Grey Wagtails** flew south on the 8th, the **Water Rail** was heard calling again on the 9th and the same morning the final **Grasshopper Warbler** of the year was still singing.

A pair of **Grey Partridge** with c10 young was found on the 10th when two **Snipe** were present (with one or two more on 13 dates). Also on the 10th seven **Brown Hawks** and four **Common Darters** were seen. A juvenile **Wigeon** arrived for a ten-day stay on the 11th along with a juvenile **Shoveler** and the same day the last **Black-headed Gull** chick finally realised what its wings were for and started to fly. Also on the 11th an adult **Common Gull** was seen, an adult **Common Tern** was found late morning but the bird of the day was a juvenile **Arctic Tern** that was present early morning only before it left north. The last record of **Great-crested Grebe** was on the 13th when a **Common Sandpiper** and **Greenshank** were noted and a very large bat attending the **Swallow** roost was thought to be a **Noctule**. **Canada Geese** peaked at 280 on the 15th when two **Shoveler** were present (after which one or two were logged on ten dates). A **Green Sandpiper** was seen on the 15th (and 16th) when 500 **Black-headed Gulls** were seen whilst a covey of 22 **Red-legged**

**Partridge** and two **Common Sandpipers** were present on the 16th. A **Grey Lag Goose** was seen on the 17th, another **Common Sandpiper** was seen on the 18th (remaining until the 19th) and around this date the **Swallow** roost peaked at c2000 birds. **Gadwall** peaked at 38 on the 19th on which date two red-head **Goosanders** flew south, becoming the earliest autumn record.

A juvenile **Spotted Redshank** arrived from the south on the 20th having earlier been seen at Annersley Pit Tip. Also on the 20th an adult and juvenile **Common Gull** flew south, at the southern end of the recording area a **Spotted Flycatcher** was a welcome addition to the year list and a **Brimstone** flew past the mound. The 20th was also a reasonable day for dragonflies with a late **Large Red-eyed Damselfly** present on meadow flash along with a male **Black-tailed Skimmer** whilst the Peter Fidler Reserve held ten **Emerald Damselflies**, a **Brown Hawker**, an **Emperor** and 15 **Common Darters**. A **Grey Lag Goose** and five red-head **Goosanders** were present on the 21st when a **Ruff** circled the flashes before continuing north-west whilst a very brief adult male **Common Redstart** was seen from the mound on the 22nd. **Lapwings** peaked at 147 on the 23rd when 14 **Swallows** and a party of four **Grey Wagtails** flying south along with three **Meadow Pipits** was the first indication of autumn passage. A red-head **Goosander** flew south on the 24th on which date a **Stoat** was hunting below the mound whilst the first three-figure count of **Mallard** for the autumn was 102 on the 25th when a female **Roe Deer** and a fawn were also seen. 18 **Teal** were present, a **Water Rail** was heard and the first **Golden Plover** of the autumn flew north on the 26th. An **Osprey** flew south-west and a **Common Sandpiper** arrived on the 27th and the same day nine **Sand Martins**, 15 **Swallows** and a **Tree Pipit** flew south. Four **Shovelers** arrived from the south on the 28th when 12 **Buzzards** were viewable from the mound as were three **Hobbies** (the latter also seen on the 29th and 30th) and two **Common Sandpipers** were present. Two **Shoveler** remained on the 29th (and then into September), four **Wigeon** were present early on the 30th before they flew west and three **Snipe** were present the same day. The strangest sighting of the day however was that of a **Cape Barren Goose**, clearly an escapee given that its home range is Southern Australia. At least 12 **Cormorants** were seen and 12 **Buzzards** were present on the 31st but the highlight of the day was proof of breeding for **Water Rail** with an adult and small chick seen in the channel adjacent to the north hide. Also on the 31st a flock of 12 **Snipe** arrived from the north to join two already on the ground, single **Common** and **Green Sandpipers** were seen, a juvenile **Common Gull** appeared briefly, a **Tree Pipit** and two **Siskins** flew south.

MARK BEEVERS.